



Security Council

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**Letter dated 11 November 2003 from the Permanent
Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed
to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit to you my letter addressed to the members of the Security Council.

I would be grateful if you could circulate the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Revaz **Adamia**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 11 November 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Before I proceed, I would like to thank, through you, the Secretary-General, the Secretariat and, in particular, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mrs. Heidi Tagliavini, and the staff of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) for their tireless efforts to move the peace process in Abkhazia, Georgia, ahead, even when the task seems to be extremely difficult.

I would also like to express our thanks for the quarterly report of the Secretary-General on the peace process, which clearly delineates both progress and lack of it in the last three months. It is in that spirit that I write to you today. It is incumbent on all of us to look upon the peace process in its entirety, to point out what we have achieved and what still needs to be done.

On the positive side of events, my Government wholeheartedly welcomes what we have come to know as the Geneva process. The three main directions elaborated during the last two meetings at Geneva bear major significance and could potentially bring us closer to real progress. However, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia stated in his address during the general debate, it must remain a priority that the process be result-oriented and not merely a process. The creation of the task forces, as foreseen in the first Geneva document, have not been carried through. It is our belief that it is the right time to move ahead on this issue.

On numerous occasions, we have noted the significance of the Sochi meeting between the Presidents of Georgia and the Russian Federation. The agreements reached there are of utmost value and potential. The working groups created under the Sochi agreement have been formed and they have held their meetings. However, as often happens, there is lack of tangible results. The understanding reached on the presidential level does not seem to have trickled down to the enforcement level.

The conditions of the internally displaced persons and their return, which the working groups were tasked to address, remain unchanged. Despite the proclamation of the so-called synchronization, the term introduced by the President of the Russian Federation, the process continues to be one-sided. The railway connection between Sokhumi and Sochi is still running without a hitch, while not a single internally displaced person has "synchronically" returned to his/her rightful place of residence. Furthermore, attempts are under way to reopen marine communication between the two cities without the consent of the Georgian Government.

One of the most significant new developments in the peace process is the introduction of the civilian police component in the Gali district. Undoubtedly, this is a positive trend, which should enhance the security situation of the internally displaced persons, as well as the international personnel present in the region. The related visit by Georgian and Abkhaz law enforcement officers to the Balkans has had a welcome effect on the situation on the whole.

The Security Council is well aware of how thorny the peace process has been in the past 10 years, since the end of hostilities. Uncertainties and disappointments have marred the efforts of many good men and women involved in the process. However, there can be no uncertainty about one fact, the fact that when the Security Council manages to muster up enough courage and constructive spirit, problems get

solved. It is in this spirit that I would like to share with the Council our views on what remains to be done, beyond the positive elements I discussed above, so that real progress can be achieved.

In one document after another, the importance of the progress in political process is strenuously highlighted. The Geneva documents also rightly recognize that no real progress can be achieved without finding a political solution. However, the Abkhaz leadership, with a reckless disregard for the will of the international community, still refuse to accept the "Boden Paper". The one-time effort to transmit the document to the Abkhazs has also lost all momentum. The Security Council, much to our disbelief, finds it insurmountably difficult even to endorse the document, giving it the authority of all members of the Council.

Much to the detriment of the peace process, the unilateral actions of one member of the Security Council still continue, despite our stated protestations. The railway connection is still operating, the en-masse issuance of Russian passports to the residents of the separatist region has never slowed down and the visits of the official representatives and politicians of the Russian Federation to Abkhazia is on the rise, each time leading to the issuance of the promise that Abkhazia will never be abandoned by Russia. Most discouraging are the deliberate efforts by these visitors to discredit any potentially positive role this Security Council member can play in the peace process. Case in point: these visits are taking place in the background of recent recommitment of the Russian Federation at the last summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Yalta (September 2003) to the 1996 decision of the heads of State of the Commonwealth.

I have to report that, unfortunately, nothing has changed in the human rights situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, a fact that is also echoed in the report of the Secretary-General. The Abkhazs continue to refuse the opening of the human rights office in the Gali district that the United Nations has been trying to establish for the past four years. Teaching in the native Georgian language is still prohibited. It doesn't take an international lawyer to qualify such a behaviour as bearing an element of genocide, unless the Security Council can find some other definition.

The so-called customs and border authorities of the Abkhaz separatist regime are functioning without any particular difficulty and, most alarmingly, it is viewed by all as the normal order of business, particularly by the peacekeepers of the Commonwealth of Independent States, who stand side by side with them. The question of the peacekeepers is of the most significant concern. Along with the well-known problems, which we have continuously tried to bring to the attention of the Council, this fall the Commonwealth of Independent States peacekeeping force managed to outdo itself. Demonstrating utmost disregard for its mandate, or any common sense for that matter, the force conducted illegal searches, detentions and interrogations as well as verbal and physical abuse of the civilian Georgian population in the Zugdidi region. Not only was the Georgian side not told in advance about these actions, but they went on despite our protestations, including at the diplomatic level.

The illegal operation of the Russian military base in Gudauta, Abkhazia, still continues, despite the commitment by the Russian Federation to shut it down. Most surprisingly, the base continues to function even after President Putin declared it closed. I would like to remind the Security Council that the base is operating without the consent of Georgia and in contradiction of international norms. We have

demonstrated our flexibility on the issue and are now ready to continue, if the appropriate Russian authorities will ever return to the negotiating table.

As we continuously try to alert the Security Council to the shortcomings in the peace process, we do hope that requisite political will and necessary leadership will be expressed by the membership to address the problems we have highlighted.

(Signed) Revaz **Adamia**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
